

CITY OF LEWISTON
PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP
MINUTES for March 8, 2010

- I. **ROLL CALL:** This workshop was held in the City Council Chambers on the First Floor of City Hall and was called to order at 5:30 p.m. This workshop was chaired by Chairperson, Lucy Bisson.

Members in Attendance: Lucy Bisson, Paul Robinson, Denis Fortier, Bruce Damon, and Eric Potvin

Members Absent: Kevin Morissette

Associate Member Present: Michael Marcotte

Associate Member Absent: Elizabeth Dube

Staff Present: David Hediger, City Planner and Cathy Lekberg, Administrative Assistant, Economic & Community Development

Lucy appointed Michael Marcotte as a voting member in lieu of the absence of Kevin Morissette and Elizabeth Dube

- II. **ADJUSTMENT TO THE AGENDA:** None

- III. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None

- VI. **PUBLIC MEETING:**

- a. **Downtown planning discussion: Review of RFP's and plans from other communities:**

David stated the City has \$180,000 to develop a Downtown Plan. He stated that Ed Barrett has asked Gil Arsenault to start thinking about the plan and also what the Planning Board thinks it should consist of. His thought is to have the Board review the documents from the different towns and come up with a list of items which would be important to the Board and to develop an RFP. He stated it should consist of items such as transportation, infrastructure, design standards, etc. The understanding is that Planning and Code will be developing this RFP with assistance from other departments in the City. Denis Fortier asked about the timeframe and David stated funds are expected mid to late summer. The Board also requested copies of the Strategic Plan that Jim Bennett completed. David stated if there are any other reports that the Board knows of, feel free to bring them to the next meeting. Lucy asked the Board to review these documents and generate a list of ideas to be discussed at the March 22nd meeting. Eric Potvin suggested that a marker board would be helpful at the next meeting to write down ideas from the Board and David stated he would provide one.

- b. **Discussion of Downtown Design Standards:**

David stated in 2004, there was a movement by City Council because they were concerned about the large projects happening in the Southern Gateway for example,

Oxford Networks, Andover College and more. The Council questioned how does the City protect these projects from business owners that want to construct a less desirable structure in the downtown, like a "pink log cabin". As of now, there are no standards keeping anyone from doing this. He stated the City Council and Planning Board went through a process and came up with guidelines, but they were never adopted because they could not agree to whether they were to be standards or guidelines or both. There is a big difference especially from staff prospective. He stated there is a mismatch of architecture existing in downtown, for example on Lincoln Street. Bruce stated that architects should be given guidelines and goals to make a building fit the area. Lucy asked the Board if they would like to review these design standards and bring them back at the March 22nd and make some comments and changes and bring them to the City Council and the Board agreed.

c. Discussion regarding zoning amendment: the expiration of approval for projects:

David stated to be consistent with site law, DEP approves projects with two years to start a project and five years to finish but in Lewiston, we have two years for substantial development of a project. The Board needs to review and tweak the language where appropriate. Lucy suggested reviewing the additional language/conditions that the DEP includes on their site law projects and provide recommendations to staff at the March 22nd meeting. The Board agreed.

d. Discussion development review approval process and creation of checklist:

David stated that a Board member suggested a checklist for the Board to consider when reviewing projects. He suggested this may be helpful when reviewing controversial projects.. Bruce stated that a checklist would be very helpful. If there were a new member of the Planning Board, it would be easy for them to overlook certain pieces that should not be overlooked. He also stated that staff members know more about the regulations and ordinances than the Board does. The checklist could be made very simple by asking does something apply or not apply to regulations and could be a yes or no answer. The Board agreed this would make it easier for them to digest and to generate a checklist.

(Paul Robinson left the meeting and Councilor Steve Morgan entered the meeting at 6:45 p.m.)

e. Discussion about application submissions:

David Hediger stated the Board would like to reduce how much paperwork is included in applications. Lucy stated that she did not need to see all the calculations and figures of a project and suggested an executive summary in layman's terms. David stated all of the information is still required from the developer but may be viewed in the Planning Department if Board members have any concerns. Bruce stated he was not qualified to look at the figures and as long as a professional engineer had their stamp on it, the summary would be good enough. David asked about the site plans and the Board agreed that 11" x 17" plans would be sufficient for the Board. David stated that administration is pushing for more electronic information rather than paper. Also, the City's runner, Mike Danforth may not be able to deliver the packages to the Board and

suggested picking them up at the City Hall. He stated they would get the packages ready a few days in advance, which would give them time to come and get them. The Board agreed to pick their packages up at the City Hall. Bruce suggested putting the packages on a flash drive and mailing them and David said he would talk with the MIS Department to see if this could be done. Lucy suggested that the agenda and comments still be sent via email and David agreed.

V. OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Any other business Planning Board Members may have relating to the duties of the Lewiston Planning Board:

Lucy Bisson stated that the minutes need to be completed in a timely manner. At this time staff is a couple months behind and David stated they look to get caught up with some of the minutes at the March 22nd meeting and staff will also look to not go longer than two meetings without draft minutes provided.

VI. READING OF MINUTES: No minutes at this time.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: The following motion was made to adjourn.

MOTION: by **Denis Fortier** that this meeting adjourn at 7:15 p.m. Second by **Eric Potvin**.

VOTED: 6-0 (Passed).

The next regularly scheduled meeting is for Monday, March 22, 2010, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Denis E. Fortier, Secretary